

# MATROX NOTCHES UP 40 YEARS

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Neil Martin listens to Matrox Imaging's **Sam Lopez** who talks about the company's 40 years in business

Matrox Imaging clocked up 40 years in business this year and Director of Sales and Marketing Sam Lopez took a time out to look back.

The company is based in Dorval, Quebec, with offices in the UK, Ireland and Germany. As a developer of component-level solutions, it serves OEMs and integrators in the manufacturing, medical diagnostic and security industries. Components include cameras, interface boards and processing platforms. End-users are in factory automation, process control, electronics and pharmaceutical

packaging, semiconductor inspection, robotics, radiology, microscopy, and video surveillance.

## Shift Towards Software

Most of what the company sells is hardware (60%), although over the last decade, there has been a shift towards software.

The company breaks down its markets into three segments: North and South America, Europe and Asia. Lopez explains: "Sales are fairly evenly split among these three areas, with Asia skewing slightly higher than the other two. The Asian market is predicted to show very strong growth for the foreseeable future. Even with the predicted economic slowdown in this region, there will still be growth in Asia."

## Changed

As to what has changed over the last 40 years, Lopez said: "At 40 years old, Matrox has seen many firsts: we were the first company to deliver PC frame grabbers, first to offer highly integrated full-featured vision controllers, and the first to build stand-alone image processing sub systems.

"We've been there since the beginning of Machine Vision, and we really opened up the possibility of doing machine vision. Having helped forge an industry that was almost nonexistent 40 years ago means that we've seen the complete evolution of the industry."

## Milestones

The company has many milestones said Lopez, but two stand out: "The advent of the PC presented new opportunities for Matrox in 1984. We were quick to embrace that technology and quickly create a line of products that could capitalize on this.



"The release of Design Assistant about six years ago opened up a whole new realm of opportunities for Matrox in terms of industries and markets Matrox wasn't involved in prior to this point. We still see huge growth potential in these various markets."

He went on to say that 2016 had been a good year for the company which achieved some new significant goals and objectives: "We're expanding into new market areas and segments, and the prospects for growth are looking quite good."

"We announced a number of new products this year both in our hardware and software lineups, all intended to make tasks in machine vision easier, faster, and more accurate."

**"One thing that is certain, Machine Vision is growing in double digits, and forecasted to continue growing in double-digits for at least the next five years."**

**Economic and Political Developments**

Lopez took a minute to think about the latest economic and political developments which have marked the year and replied: "Having been around for 40 years, we've seen and gone through many 'disruptive' changes, and we've found a way to weather the storm and prosper."

"Matrox is a global company. Our business is well diversified and as such we don't depend on one territory. So, world affairs can have some impact, but what happens in one country should likely not have a major impact on overall projects."

**Biggest Opportunity**

He moved on to consider what he thinks is the biggest opportunity with the machine vision industry: "One thing that is certain, Machine

Vision is growing in double digits, and forecasted to continue growing in double-digits for at least the next five years. It's not just in the traditional areas surrounding manufacturing but in new fields surrounding research and automation outside of the factory floor. Our goal is to make sure that we are taking the opportunities that are presented to us."

He also touched on what might represent the biggest threat around the corner: "There's not one easily identifiable threat right now, but there's always uncertainty surrounding the global economic situation, and there's fear of another global recession. So in broad strokes, the biggest threat would be a global recession, in that this industry is end-consumer driven and in that circumstance, consumers would stop spending."

**GTR Smart Camera**

He finished by highlighting one of the company's products: "Well I'd love to talk about all of our products, but we're particularly proud of the Iris GTR smart camera announced earlier this year. We believe this device, that integrates processing directly on the camera, will allow Matrox to once again break through many barriers in machine vision and create new deployment opportunities for machine vision where it may not have been accessible or feasible in the past."

Matrox is now set for the next 40 years.

